

## **Finnish food trends in travel blogs**

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<p>The aim of the study was to find out the current Finnish and global food trends in tourists' travel blogs written about Finland. Nordic cuisine has become relevant due to its positive attributes including health, simplicity and concern for the environment. There has also been an increasing interest in Finnish food that aligns with the current global food trends. The gathered knowledge of Finnish food trends can be used by different stakeholders in the hospitality industry to understand food choices and build upon their own offerings for tourists.</p> <p>The food related lifestyle model was used as a framework which is used for detecting long-term trends in a cross-cultural context by studying the determinants of consumers' value perceptions. The elements of the model are ways of shopping, cooking methods, quality aspects, consumer situations and purchasing motives. The theoretical part further describes recognized current global and Finnish food trends with this model.</p> <p>The data for the research was gathered from blogs during a timeframe of five years, 2012-2016. Based on the recognized trends, narrative analysis of the blogs was conducted with a qualitative method. The number of mentions of the chosen trends were counted into a quantitative form per each year to recognize trend patterns. To support the research, the concordance program AntConc was utilized to search for specific keywords and commonalities in text data. A keyword search was conducted that indicated the strengths of ingredients, places and food items present in the text.</p> <p>Together, 136 blogs were researched. Finnish traditional food, superfood and local food had the most mentions in the texts overall and are the strongest trends at the moment. Traditional food had the largest amount of mentions in the material but the trend is slowly declining. The trends that are on the rise consist of super food, street food, seasonal food and international food. Organic food, product information, ecological cooking methods and vegetarian food has remained stagnant but with little overall visibility in the blogs.</p> <p>The results can be used to gain a deeper understanding of the tourists' purchasing behaviours for education purposes, forecasting and for entrepreneurs to use the opportunities of the strong trends for their own interests to improve offerings and increase profitability. These could include enhancing Finland's brand plans, developing food strategies, new concepts and menus for stakeholders. The Finnish food trend results help understand and take advantage of the current perceived values in consumers' food choices and get insight in the present marketplace.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Trends, Blogs, Finnish food culture, eWoM, Corpus linguistics	

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# 1 Introduction

“Helsinki’s food scene, coming on strong” was the title of an article written by the Washington Post. It discussed the new mentality with Finnish cuisine; a new generation of enthusiastic chefs are finding new ways of cooking with local and traditional foods. Especially in Helsinki a new wave of entrepreneurs is redesigning what is “Finnish cuisine”. (Siitsemä, 2014)

This article by the Washington Post sparked a larger interest the Finnish food scene. I started to read blogs in the hopes of find new restaurants and locations to visit to get in touch with the best recommendations and unknown gems. I found that I was onto something new and exciting that I hadn’t experienced before; the Finnish modern and innovative food scene.

Finland is portrayed as an up-and-coming and trendy tourism destination. It is important for Finland to stay relevant while understanding the wants and needs in the marketplace to keep the momentum going. This is possible by finding out our strengths and using them to gain a competitive advantage. The use of blogs as data source and WoM information makes it an important tool for studying people’s opinions and find information of a non-commercial nature.

The aim of this thesis is to find out what the current trends of Finnish cuisine are among tourists with the help of content analysis of travel blogs. We can then plan ahead and build on the Finnish destination image with the gathered knowledge. Those working in hospitality or those who have an interest in current developments can use this information of upcoming trends to their advantage.

The empirical part will be a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods. First I will count the mentions of existing trends in the blogs and see if any patterns surface. I will also use the AntCont concordance program that helps sort through big data to find any underlying events, phenomena or words that might be of interest to the study.

The data collection will rely on the theory about identified global and Finnish trends. Mentions of said trends will be searched from the blogs qualitatively and counted per year to find arising patterns, sudden increases or decreases of mentions and recognizing phenomena by quantitative analysis. Also, the text analysis program AntConc will be used to

see the mentions in their context and help to easily find specific words in a large amount of text.

Gaining understanding of Finnish food trends through the eyes of bloggers will help entrepreneurs and other stakeholders find out our strengths and use them to our advantage, building a stronger, unique Finnish food culture and help branding efforts. The research focuses mostly on identifying cuisine that is present in the last 5 years.

The goal of the thesis study is to find out the of tourists' food consumption trends in Finland from the years 2012-2016 by identifying trend patterns in their blogs. The theory part consists on the Food Related Lifestyle model created by Klaus G. Grunert, Karen Brunso, Lone Bredahl and Anne Bech (1993) that will help comprehend purchasing behaviour and quality factors that affect consumer decisions. A part of the theory will focus on what food trends are and what trends can globally be seen. We will then look at the emerging Finnish food scene and why especially our cuisine has become so sought-after. The popularity of Finnish food, both traditional and modern, is closely linked to a larger global movement.

## **2 Trends in food culture**

A trend is a pattern of gradual change that progresses over time. The word 'trend' can be used in many ways depending on the subject; a furniture designer, statistical analyst or car manufacturer will use the term differently. A trend can also be described as a process of change that (sometimes) originates from product development that (sometimes) result in new products. How you look the definition is up to your own focus on the subject. (Vejlgaard, 2008)

The understanding that most of consumer have is that a new product or alternative outlook becomes hugely popular in a short amount of time. This is somewhat true since a trend usually starts from an innovation that is taken into use by trendsetters. Those are the small number of forerunners that adapt the latest ideas. After that a trend can become widely popular in the mainstream. A trend is not the sum of one event only, it can change due to changes in the external environment as well. The trend can die away quickly or it can remain permanent in the mainstream. (Vejlgaard, 2008)

Complex changes in technology, politics or culture happen over long periods of time are trends but if they were very rapid they would be considered revolutions. When these kinds of long-term changes are happening that affect most of the society they are called megatrends which last for at least five years and might not even fade away. They redefine the industry. Fads then again are short-lived trends that create an enthusiastic craze in one segment of the population but die out soon. A microtrend usually lasts for 3-5 years but reaches a broader segment. (Vejlgaard, 2008)

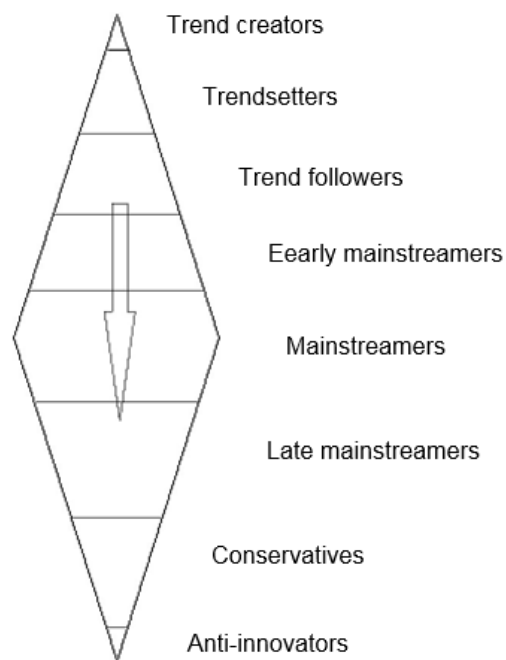


Figure 1. The Diamond-Shaped Trend Model (Vejlgaard, 2008)

There are ways of identifying the trend patterns by looking at with varying methods that predict trend patterns with the help of systematic analysis. A model about the lifecycle of trends is developed by Vejlgaard that considers six attitudes toward the trends in the society. There are six personality profiles:

- Trendsetters
- Trend followers
- Early mainstreamers
- Mainstreamers
- Late mainstreamers
- Conservatives

The trend creators are the ones who start trends with innovating something completely new. These people can come from anywhere and are usually not a group in themselves, but they are placed at the top of the trend model since they create the original trend. When spotting new trends, you should observe people, especially those that are interested in innovations. Trendsetters are curious about new things and usually adopt new

styles and ideas before the mainstream. The key is to detect what the trendsetter are following and follow the same things as them. There are often clues about an upcoming trend before they take off called weak signals. New trends can be a counter-reaction to anything that has become mainstream. If an item is seen in at least two industries and places at the same time it can be a sign. Trends tend to bubble underneath before surfacing and they can be predicted by skillful observation in the trendsetter environment. (Vejlgaard, 2008)

Trend followers are open to change and gravitate towards trends if they see someone using a style or a product, but want to be certain that the trend will be recognized and accepted by others. The next stage is the early mainstreamers. They are also curious about new trends but have to see it multiple times being put to use so they are described to be a bit more uncertain than the trendsetters. (Vejlgaard, 2008)

The mainstream only go along with trends when they feel that everybody else is doing the same thing. They do not want to be in the forefront of new trends but they do not want to be left behind and viewed as too guarded either. Late mainstreamers are very timid in changing their ways. They dismiss most ideas and only alter their ways under pressure. That can sometimes be when the old options are out of reach and they have to conform. Conservatives are in the other end of the trend model. In one example, Vejlgaard uses the Amish as a reference for the utter denial of new trends. The religious group has not changed their habits in hundreds of years and cherish their old ways of not using electricity or cars in their daily lives. (Vejlgaard, 2008)

These personality characteristics of how people view upcoming trends can be seen throughout the society. There are some patterns that can be identified to predict trends. The more connected the city is globally, the bigger chance it has to become widespread. Also, the bigger variation of trendsetters the city has, impacts the rate of trends coming from the area. If many similar trends are created there, it is expected that even more trends will emerge that are alike to the ones that have surfaced. The media can help escalate trends through creating awareness and interest of trends as well. (Vejlgaard, 2008)

Not all trends become mainstream, some stay as fads and stay unknown to most of the public. New products and tastes are currently overproduced and not everything can become a trend. Some new trends can be unpractical, too expensive or it might be too difficult to produce to the masses. On the other hand, if a trend can be imitated, observable



and if media is telling about it, it is likely to become a mainstream trend. Such can be totally new things that have not been seen yet or are not yet in the mainstream or perhaps some products that are developing linearly and can thus be predicted. It is easier for smaller companies to follow trends in comparison to larger corporations. As a small business owner, there is a chance to attract trend seekers or early mainstreamers faster and change styles. (Vejlgaard, 2008)

One thing about the future of trends is certain; technology will play a major part. Changes in style and taste has been and will be an ongoing force that drive trends. Copying new products can be very fast. When people are on the lookout for new things and willing to change, the pace can be quick even with items that were difficult to produce before since they can be manufactured abroad. People are becoming multicultural and easily adopt new ideas from around the world while the media escalates the process. On the other hand, when societies begin to be more individualized and have their own areas of interest, the trends scatter between there interest groups and might not spread in the same ways or it might take more time. The psychological patterns however are less likely to change in the same manner. (Vejlgaard, 2008)

## **2.1 Recent changes in global food culture**

“Changes in agricultural practice over the past 50 years have increased the world's capacity to provide food for its people through increases in productivity, greater diversity of foods and less seasonal dependence. Food availability has also increased as a consequence of rising income levels and falling food prices. This has resulted in considerable changes in food consumption over the past 50 years” (Kearney, 2010)

People are now having an astounding amount of choices when it comes to food. Urbanization and food industry marketing along with trade liberalization policies are influencing a nutritional transition. People are moving towards a more diversified diet but while the options broaden, there is evidence of increasing rates of chronic heart disease and other health-related issues that come with it. Consuming saturated fats and sugars in excess with limited exercise is having a major impact in most parts of the world. (The Hartman Group, 2015)

There are forces impacting global food culture. Politics, the economy, environmental changes and scientific advances are all influencing what we eat.

Corporate and consumer responsibility is starting to become a bigger factor in making purchasing decision. People increasingly want to purchase ethical products in the western countries even if the price would be higher. There has been a small decline in for instance organic foods because of the economic crisis but it is believed that the trend will grow rapidly in the near future. This is due to grassroot efforts and movements that help bring the products to market and many well-known businesses wanting to be more sustainable that has led to a larger impact that contemplates resourcing food.

Food activism bring the power to the consumer and they ultimately make the choice. With enough people a shift from big corporations to small local and organic businesses can be seen. Ethics play a big role in the belief of “better” food, both nutritionally and sustainably, that slowly changes the market.

## **2.2 Food related lifestyle model**

The model created by L.J Frewer, E. Risvik and H. Schifferstein (2001) is a tool for the use in market surveillance. It is based on the original food-related lifestyle-model with the same concept originally developed by Klaus G. Grunert, Karen Brunso, Lone Bredahl ja Anne Bech (1993). The model is used for the purpose of detecting long-term trends in a cross-cultural context by studying the determinants of consumers' value perceptions.

Studying perceived value of different goods can give a competitive advantage to the company. When customers see greater value in relation to price they are more eager to buy it. This kind of advantage can be created by making a cost-effective product to sell it at a lower price (cost leadership) or by differentiating your product to give it more perceived value in the eyes of the persons buying it. By gaining information on the values of your customers a new position in the market can be reached by making the offering more attractive. They will pay a higher price relative to the producing cost. The important reason why trends should be monitored closely by market surveillance is to create a profitable strategy for differentiation. (Gruner et. al., 1993)

Classical segmentation pursuits can currently be seen as less suitable when it comes to determining purchasing behaviour. The fragmentation of the markets has led to a greater variation within the segments and made separation efforts less accurate. Applying other instruments for explaining behavioural patterns has become an interest, especially those

that can explain and identify various, post-materialistic, global patterns. (Gruner et. al., 1993)

The life style studies originally gained popularity when Wells (1975) introduced psychographic segmentation variables that concentrated more on studying the subjective choices that guide consumers instead of looking at the behaviour from outside through demographics or other objective measurements. The life style approach can be seen as a different approach also due to the emphasis on characteristics of the consumer instead of the product itself.

The lifestyle model comprises of five elements of cognitive structures that link food products to values; ways of shopping, cooking methods, quality aspects, consumption situations and purchasing motives (Frewer et.al. 2001). These components give us a framework of studying the existing trends. Under each group of distinguished category of determinants in the food related lifestyle model, recognized current trends are discussed.

### **Ways of shopping**

This concerns the means of how people buy their food. Purchasing behaviours that are grouped under this element are for instance the likelihood of frequenting speciality shops, niche shopping and if consumers find purchasing food enjoyable. This grouping defines the interest in price criteria as well. Price-sensitive consumers are very aware of the cost and will try to make the best deal. (Frewer et.al. 2001)

One factor is also the importance of product information. Some like to compare different products to choose the best one for them and others do not find the information necessary at all. Because of the great number of options available in the marketplace, people are becoming more aware of the choices they can make depending on their own preferences. (Frewer et.al. 2001). The development of information and communication technologies have made the market very information-intense. There are, however, also challenges with the complexity of information; consumers find it more difficult to compare and assess value of products. Young people especially are very educated in knowing the marketplace and making good decisions in comparison to previous generations that had a significantly more limited selection therefore the need to know the marketplace was not as important. There are still subjective differences within this group. Some customers deliberate on their purchases for a long time and some are very impulse-driven. It has also become challenging for companies to convey their marketing messages and keep people engaged with the brands. (OECD, 2010)

New mobile technology has made it possible for customers to purchase restaurant foods via mobile applications like Foodora and Wolt and. Online shopping and the use of different services is becoming more and more comfortable and restaurants can offer alternatives to at-home dining with delivery services. This is also revolutionizing the broader landscape. Restaurants might operate only through mobile applications, not needing a traditional restaurant building at all. The use of smartphone applications is becoming a significant tool in choosing restaurants on the go, making reservations and give reviews easily. Mobile technology is embedded in restaurant services in many ways. the Point of Sale(POS)-strategy empowers iPads and mobiles to be used in tables as menus and the customer can order and pay without a face-to-face interaction. The application in your mobile phone can be used as a regular customer card with coupons and bonuses. Companies also use them for other marketing purposes for instance a notification can be sent to you when you are close to the restaurant or if they have any special offers today. Discounts can be obtained through referrals. Technological advances are a megatrend that will be impacting the ways of purchasing even more in the future. (BMI Research, 2016)

### **Cooking methods**

This element goes through the process and preparation of food items into meals. Now, chefs and customers are rediscovering traditional cooking methods. The use age-old recipes and ingredients that have previously been used in the practice of Ayurveda for restoring the body's inner balance are now popular. Turmeric shots, smoothies and teas are abundant. The same goes with rediscovering longstanding, simple recipes that incorporate ingredients that used to be staples, such as sardines. Simple dishes with good quality ingredients and health benefits are on the rise. (Sterling-Rice Group 2016)

Nevertheless, a part of cooking methods deals with the convenience of food. Some people are spontaneous and hardly plan their meals beforehand while others have scheduled their meals well in advance. (Frewer et.al. 2001). The fast-paced lifestyle has resulted in a rise of prepared meals, fast-food and a general need for efficiency. There is a growing popularity for casual restaurants that offer healthy and fresh food to accommodate both health-conscious and busy consumers. (BMI Research 2016)

On the contrast, there are the people who want to indulge on their meals, sometimes acknowledging a mindful eating and cooking habit. The Centre for Mindful Eating describes this conviction as listening to your body and being aware of its needs about being hungry,

thirsty or satiated. They also invite the person to concentrate on the food tastes without judgment and eating slowly. This view highlights the need for a change in the relationship to food and respecting it along with taking care of yourself in the right way. (The Centre for Mindful Eating 2017) Personal health is gaining new opportunities with the help of technological innovations like the use of wearable electronics, smart watches and activity wristbands that currently track the person's movement during the day. It is believed that digital health management will be a future megatrend once the possibility to monitor the intake of calories and fluids becomes cost-relevant. Even now, some of these activity measuring devices remind the user of drinking the correct amount of water per day.

There is also a heightened awareness of food waste. The concern for the environment makes people think about what foods we buy and how much of it goes unused. Even if we have everything to excess, there is a counterculture that think we should not use the resources we have in vain and are trying to come up with alternative solutions for the situation. An ethical viewpoint is taken where there is an effort to minimize the surplus foods and make something else instead. Food that is made from animal by-products that have been seen as useless before, are now coming back. This trend goes hand in hand with the use of time-worn recipes, as chefs and restaurants are bringing back items that used to be used but are no longer seen as appealing. This means using parts of the animals that usually wouldn't be consumed much or would be thrown away. Fish leftovers can be made to broth, unused parts of the vegetables like stems for salads or using carrot pulp from making fresh carrot juice for vegetable burger patties. (BMI Research 2016) A trend that arose in the past few years is the trend of Nose to Tail eating, which is the consumption of an entire animal and all of its parts being used as beneficial parts of making food. Chef Fergus Henderson has brought this aspect of cooking into the mainstream by his restaurants and his published books on the philosophy of 'Nose to Tail' dining.

Socializing is important for humans and real-time interactions are happening with friends and family with the help of sharing meals. Either in homes or restaurants, people are coming together, cooking and connecting. It is possible to connect with unknown people as well through apps like 'Etsy for dinner' and arrange a communal dining experience. A sharing economy makes it possible to exchange services or goods with each other. The other asks for help with gathering the harvest and the other gets a part of it as pay for the work. Networks like this are created constantly within several industries and interest groups. (Sterling-Rice Group 2016)

## Quality aspects

The quality of food is a that consist of different elements that contribute to the overall perception of quality. Those are for instance the flavour and appearance of the food. There is also an important element that is food safety. In many countries, there are standardized processes of processing foods that are enforced through different laws and regulations. Tracking, labelling and monitoring food manufacturing is vital for the upkeep of public health. In Finland, Evira (Elintarviketurvallisuusvirasto) leads, develops and directs the supervisions of the food chain and restaurants. They prevent safety risks in the farming industry of animals along with animal health welfare. In addition, they regulate plant health and production utensils. They have a vast array of duties that collectively further the well-being of the whole process an in the end, the consumer. These tasks are carried out together with other authorities like municipalities, the Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency (Tukes), National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira), Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment(Ely-keskus) and the Customs. This network of actors along with the generally recognized characteristic of Finland as a country with a low corruption rate guarantees the high standard of food quality for the consumers. (Evira 2017)

The nutritional value of the food has become a megatrend among consumers. People have started to buy food on a medical basis and decide their purchases on how healthy it is. This movement is called medicalization of food. Many individual ingredients are used on the grounds that they are especially beneficial, for instance turmeric or kale. Those foods have been dubbed “superfoods”. Many domestic foods in Finland have superfood qualities because of their nutritional value, e.g. bilberries, buckthorn, lingonberries, mushrooms and different types of fish. Salmon is considered the superfood of 2017 due to its high content of healthy omega-3 fats. (Dr Oz The Good Life 2017)

The gap between food and medicine has been significantly narrowing as information about the beneficial aspects of certain foods and ingredients have become more researched and published. Many try to prevent diseases or manage their health through their diet. New studies emerge constantly about the health benefits or unhealthy qualities of certain foods. Sometimes the discussion is about the same item, making it challenging for the consumers to have a unanimous opinion, like with the case of butter, coconut oil, milk and meats. With the massive amount of information available with one nutritional science study contending the other, consumers are choosing sides. At the moment, the debate on healthy food is ongoing. (Sanger-Katz & Quealy 2016)

According to Frewer, Risvik & Schifferstein (2001), the quality aspect of the food related lifestyle model refers to higher-order attributes in foods which includes freshness and the flavour of the food that is not dependent on individual products. After processed and ready-made foods had become widely used and praised for their usefulness in saving time and effort, there is now a counter movement where consumers make their own food from start to finish at home. Using fresh ingredients and whole foods contribute to the taste of the food and it is believed to be of better quality.

Local food is seen as fresher than imported foods since it does not have to travel for long distances and still contains its nutritious value. Local food has also become increasingly popular because of the heightened awareness of the carbon footprint in food purchases and people are trying to support local businesses, bringing the income to the smaller operators closer to home. Local food can sometimes be more expensive than the food from other countries because it is not manufactured in bulk and the cost of producing the food is higher. Many are choosing quality over quantity due to their value perceptions of quality in food and thus choosing locally grown alternatives. (Frewer et.al. 2001).

Organic produce is considered cleaner since it is produced without the use of fertilisers and chemicals. Labelling schemes have made organic foods recognizable to the public and created a parallel market that appeals to the consumers with its ideological principles. There are many chemical compounds that stay in the human body for long periods of time and the safety of digesting chemicals, preservatives or pesticides in general is questioned. 'Natural' foods are seen as a better alternative for the environment and personal health. (Lawrence et al. 2002) There is however a known issue of "greenwashing" that takes place when companies claim to be "green" through marketing and public relations and have environmental concerns but are instead hiding the whole truth from the customer for the purpose of gaining a better image. The company can for instance say that they are making "green" investments or have made an environmentally conscious decision in the eyes of the consumer while they are still acting in an environmentally harmful way. (Greenwashing Index 2017)

GMOs, Genetically Modified Organisms are dividing opinions between consumers. Humans have taken use of natural selection for centuries in creating crops that yield more crop and can stand harsh weather conditions. Animals have been bred for their abilities for droughting and selecting placid tempers has made them easier to work with in farm work. Now, we have a prospect of modifying these plants and animals through their genes and engineer the traits for them as we please. Genetic research is rapidly moving forward and

consumers are questioning whether GMOs should be used or not. (Debating Europe 2017)

Those who are in favour of GMOs argue that they are a vital means to increase yields to feed the growing population, while the farm land area of the world is shrinking. They believe that stronger crops help especially third-world countries to produce more food and make it possible for harsher climates to farm plants that are altered for those purposes. Science can also bring about crops built-in resistance for pesticides, thus reducing the amount of chemicals that have to be used for the survival of plants. Genetic modification can increase the nutrient levels of food and make it healthier, along with improved taste and longer shelf-life, resulting in less waste. (Debating Europe 2017)

Those who are against the use of GMOs reason that they are an environmental risk. Long-term effects are yet unknown and modified organisms could harm the natural environment. Patenting seeds and having them yield crop only once make farmers dependent on big companies that provide the seeds. Big businesses have an advantage over smaller ones, resulting in a monoculture of crop. There has been outrage in the news over the actions of Monsanto who are having monopoly over the seed business in the world and raising their prices. So far there is limited regulation in this industry, giving the corporations the upper hand. People want to have a good conscience of what they consume. Using GMOs are still an open question since there are many claims for and against them. (Debating Europe 2017)

This group of determinants of cognitive value perceptions include the mention of trying out novelty foods. Changes in communicating has made people more aware of different foods and the population is becoming multicultural. The demographic that are born after the millennials, 'Generation Z', do not view ethnic cuisine as foreign. They are moving away from well-established dishes and simply view ethnic cuisine as 'cuisine'. While people before went out to a restaurant to eat Japanese or Chinese food, they are now taking a liking to individual dishes like poke bowls or ramen. (Datassential 2016)

When cultures overlap, they exchange traditions. Getting different ideas and putting them together to make fusion foods began in the 90's. This new cooking style rapidly became a popular trend resulting in a devolving state of everything being thrown together like Spanish and Chinese foods. At that time the chefs went a bit overboard with the concepts and fusion food became so far-fetched that its origins could not be deciphered any longer. In addition to that, the technicality and layered tastes was a bit too much and in the end, it went out of favour. Now fusion foods are making a comeback with expansion of global



awareness and interest in new tastes and textures. Sushi burritos are an example of this. The authentic flavours are taken into consideration by chefs and they are trying to respect the old methods of different cultures with purpose and intent. (Westbrooks 2013)

### **Consumption situations**

Technological advances are escalating growing and distributing food around the world. In a short time, we have grown accustomed to getting what we want from around the world, no matter the season. The freedom to choose from a large selection of food items has also shaped our purchasing decisions. Food can be consumed around the clock which has led to a “snacking culture”. Choosing the right portion size is in the hands of the manufacturer and is harder to consume the right amount of energy due to uncontrolled intake. Traditionally, the meals were predefined and they had little variation. In traditional eating culture portions were big and they were eaten at the same times. In the modern food culture, we eat when we feel like it and a breakfast or dinner can be many different things, like a taco or a salad. (The Hartman Group, 2015)

The accessibility of food has become a competitive advantage but it has also lead to interesting new trends seen in the western world such as food trucks and street food. Both Finnish traditional foods and eastern cuisines like Vietnamese, Mexican and Middle Eastern food can be bought on the go. Fusion foods also can be seen between these in the street front restaurants. Sriracha and soy sauce have become the ketchup and mustard of today. Especially in the summer, take-out dishes can be bought from busy public places and festivals. Flow festival has been at the forefront of this street food cuisine development when they invited businesses to sell their products there. (Nelimarkka 2017)

Starting in Finland May 2011, the world’s largest food carnival took its first steps. Ravintolapäivä, Restaurant Day, was created with the idea that everyone could open a pop-up restaurant, café or bar anywhere they wished. The event was organized four times a year. This new concept took off by storm, spreading around the world and in 2016, 100 000 restaurateurs in 75 different countries had catered for 3 million customers and over. After it became so popular, the volunteer group and association decided to not establish any specific days for Restaurant Day. That did not seem to be beneficial so they have now decided to change back to the four times a year strategy starting from May 2017. The event is a communal project that gathers together all types of people. It is inspiring for both those who are serving foods and drinks but also the customers enjoying foods and drinks they would normally not have tasted anywhere else. It is yet to be seen how big this movement will grow worldwide. (Restaurant Day 2017)

## **Purchasing motives**

The willingness to pay a certain price for the product relates to the perceived quality. This relationship is referred as value for money (Zeithaml 1988). In the past value and quality has been alleged to be similar in nature. Zeithaml confers that value is actually more individualistic and personal than quality. According to the grey benefit-model by Feigin and Young (1970) there are many levels of psychological pay-off for the customer for choosing a certain product. As an illustration in their study is hairspray. At the simplest level is a product attribute, e.g. the hair holds the hair and makes it soft. The next level is functional attribute; the hairspray makes hair easier to manage. The higher attribute of that is the practical benefit of the person not having to spend so much time on their hair. Lastly there is an emotional pay-off as the highest attribute. The time saved by the hairspray makes the person be free to do other things they want. The purchasing motives for a product can be any of these attributes, but the highest-level attribute of emotional pay-off can be the deciding factor, depending on the personal value that the person sees in it. (Zeithaml 1988)

Purchasing motives also include different diets. Following a vegetarian or vegan diet has become a choice for more and more people. Not only is it ethical and friendlier for the environment, but studies show that people are avoiding animal-based products because of health reasons. Vegans tend to have lower levels of cholesterol and are less likely to die of cancer or heart disease. Currently the number of vegans in Britain has increased by 360% in the last 10 years. Attitudes are shifting and becoming more positive towards vegetarians. Those who prefer to mostly avoid animal products but are still eating them sometimes are called flexitarian. Nowadays people are not categorized so strictly, people can choose of the level of their veganism and have more choices in what food they consume. It is believed that this trend will last into the future. (The Telegraph 2016)

Alternatives for these animal products are popping up everywhere, every company wanting to cash in on the money flow because of the rising demand. In most of the markets there are vegan meats and dairy products. Almond, soy, and whey milks are bought instead of milk and imitation meats can be manufactured from soy (tofu and tempeh), fungi or gluten-based substitutes. Cheeses, flours made from nuts and pulses, ancient grain popcorn, kale chips and butter analogues like nut butters are the new hot topics with increasing demand when foundational foods are transformed.

Consumers purchasing decisions and trends are disrupting the markets and drawing back the international corporations from their long-standing pedestals. Consumers can rapidly shift their habits for the advantage of a certain product and cause a downfall of sales in a previous hit. Even water does not suffice any longer; coconut water, aloe, cactus and birch waters have become variations that appeal to the people. (Foodbytes 2016)

Knowledge in these types of behaviouristic models give a framework of understanding the complex matrix of what the consumer perceives as valuable. It is important to remember that the food related lifestyle model is a cross-culturally valid model that does not apply to specific products, but to cognitive purchasing decision making in lifestyles for the consumption of food. That is why it's especially suited for researching trends. The value of surveying trends is not just in the restaurant businesses but also the sellers of all levels in the food manufacturing chain. Spotting the current trends can help those businesses contribute to the end value of the product and see how particularly their business can benefit from them.

### **2.3 Summary**

Consumer perception of quality elements in the food play a big part in the food choices they make. The effect consumers have in the market currently cannot be demeaned. The values that are guiding in the purchasing decisions for each person are affecting the fads, micro- and megatrend that surface. The farm-to-fork thinking that considers the whole food industry as a whole has become even more prevalent when more information has become available through different channels. Production of food and its impact on the environment are important to the well-aware consumers of today which has led to healthier and more conscious consumption. Organically grown foods, local produce and vegetarian diets are a rapidly growing market.

There is an increasing emphasis on authenticity. When the food industry has shifted away from the old ways of making food, there is a countermovement that highlights the need for straightforward and honest food. Pure ingredients and traditional, local methods are seen as more natural. Certifications of origin and protected foods have more value for the customer since it brings about a feeling of something long-lost and reassuring that must be appreciated. The effect of the value perceptions that consumers have is seen in the food industry. Natural food is believed healthier and traditional foods are seen superior to the modern food selection. These perceptions are strongly present and affects our decisions when we are choosing food products. Simplicity and natural flavors are revered. (Esbjerg et. al. 2012)

Gastronomy has become an experience that tourists search for in new locations. Food tourism, tourists that travel partially or fully with the intention of enjoying the food in the destination, is gaining momentum since the location has such a strong connection to the origin of the food. Countries with a strong culinary identity like France and Italy have attracted travelers throughout history with original and honest local cuisine that incorporates the experience of the food experience in its surroundings. Food tourism can bring income to rural areas and people while creating an effect that benefits the whole area. Having a strong culinary identity can be a selling point to travelers and bring tourists to countries they would not otherwise visit. Developing and branding the destinations unique gastronomy can greatly benefit the economy of that market. (UNWTO 2012)

### **3 Finnish cuisine**

Finland is the northernmost agricultural country. Because of the four different seasons, the supply of different foods varies greatly. Demanding weather, cold winters and short summers have challenged the population to yield foods in difficult conditions. There are also benefits in living with the seasons; the bright and long summer days generate delicious and colourful produce. The close bond with nature has defined Finnish cuisine. Mushrooms and berries are gathered from the wild while fish and various game is hunted for food. (Suomen ruokatieto, 2017)

Throughout history the availability of food has been scarce. Therefore, preserving and storing different foods has been a necessity that has shaped our food culture to this day. Our common history with Russia and Sweden has resulted in a cultural merge but the divide can still be seen between eastern and western cuisines. The proximity of Russia is a factor that is unique to Finland compared to other Scandinavian countries. (Suomen Ruokatieto 2009)

The population of Finland had a very hunter/gatherer lifestyle many decades ago which lead to the integration of ingredients from hunting and foraging and this has been imprinted into Finnish traditional cuisine. The local fauna and flora that has been able to survive among the harsh environment that Finland has, is the deriving factor which makes up traditional food in Finland. (Pelo. 2011)

Fish has been researched to still be the most eaten source of protein among all Finnish people and this comes directly from it being a reliable resource of protein when nothing

else was available. The ability to cure and ferment fish also has made it a very crucial resource in the cold winter months where the availability of proteins is very scarce. As for the consumption of meat, almost all animals have been eaten in Finland that roam here. During times of famine the government attempted to introduce horsemeat but the trend never took off, although recently there has been an upsurge in the procurement of horsemeat due to its low price. The method of cooking was mainly done as stews and pots, the most famous of these dishes being known as Karelian stew. Frying meats and making roasts did not come into favor until later. Smoking, drying and curing meat are still popular methods today. (Elo 2014)

Grains are an essential part of traditional Finnish cuisine. Rye, barley and wheat being among the most used. Grains were used to make everything from porridge, breads and even drinks and liquors. Sour rye bread being among the most popular breads to this day because of the fact that it is very easy to store, it can be frozen and does not go bad quickly. (Elo 2014)

Seasonality plays a large part in Traditional Finnish cuisine. There are specific times of year when specific food items are eaten, and highly anticipated. One of the most awaited times of year is June, when the new potato crops are ripe and the first berries are pickable. New potatoes are eaten nearly all summer long with all of the other ingredients that summer brings such as herring, crayfish and salmon. Through the summer months when all of the fresh ingredients are available such as chanterelles, berries and apples, Finns traditionally begin to store large quantities of produce in their freezers. This comes from the past from being a necessity to have adequate stores of food for the harsh winter months. (Elo 2014)

The tradition of finding one's own food is what has carried its way along the centuries. Finland has a law known as 'Everyman's Right' which allows any person to fish with a line and pick whatever the earth gives them in the wild. As for hunting, there are very strict regulations in place to what can be hunted and what time of year it is possible to do so, but the habit of finding one's own food and being able to prepare it from start to finish is growing positively. The experience of making food in the outdoors is one that nearly all Finnish people are accustomed to, may it be it at their summer cottage, or with friends in the many tenting/resting sites that Finland has to offer. (Elo 2014)

### **3.1 New Nordic Food**

The New Nordic Food manifesto was created in 2004 when 12 chefs from the Nordic countries came together to form an undertaking to promote Nordic cuisine and make it known and appreciated. In 2005, it was made a political programme in the Nordic Council of Ministers. The aim was to create a new lifestyle that benefits the environment and society. Even though Nordic food was not a part of the big kitchens in the world like France, their goal was more to create an alternative to junk food and make people more aware of the diversity in food with healthier and tastier options. (Norden 2017)

Because the style of food is not elitist it can be served anywhere. The main emphasis on New Nordic Food is to serve unique food with the best possible quality. Old techniques are taken into use to make something new and forgotten food items are brought back. The importance of local and regional foods, seasonality and sustainability appeal to those who want to enjoy pure tastes and the Nordic character with an ethical twist. (Norden 2017)

The concept behind New Nordic Cuisine could be implemented anywhere in the world. It stresses flavour, simplicity, purity and freshness. The intensive summer seasons give the varied produce its intensive taste and the aim is to keep the simple ingredients as natural as possible. Pure waters and untouched forests are our advantage; berries, mushrooms and fish is our Nordic pride and they are viewed as pure ingredients. Seasons guarantee freshness where everybody can enjoy the tastes around us. Harmony in our societies and nature conveys our destination image and is also the basis of the New Nordic Food-projects. The movement has been implemented in various forms in the Nordic countries, helping to promote and brand our own style with unique selling points and as a culinary experience one wouldn't want to miss. (Norden 2008)

### **3.2 An emerging Finnish food scene**

As the world becomes more global and cuisines become more known, the Finnish food scene is becoming a frontrunner in many different aspects. The attainment of honest flavours and cooking methods is one that the Finland's chef hold dear. The use of seasonal foods and different preservation techniques is a prime example of the strive to attain pure 'Finnish' flavours. For example, new potatoes are served at nearly every restaurant when they come into season. Secondly the law of Every Man's Right is another aspect which can directly be seen in the Finnish food scene. The use of wild herbs and mushrooms picked by chefs can be seen throughout many Fine Dine restaurants in Finland. Thirdly the importance of consumer safety and agriculture safety are among the best in the world.

Finland has very strict guidelines and regulations for what food can be sold to customers and what food cannot be. There are several government agencies which maintain these rules and therefore there are seldom any slipups. (Finland Promotion Board 2017)

The realization and exposing of the amount of waste made by the population is becoming a very 'on-topic' issue in Finland. The issue of waste has made its way directly into the food scene by pop-restaurants and a new restaurant using only 'waste products'. An example of this is restaurant Loop, which uses only ingredients that suppliers would have otherwise disposed of.

### **3.3 National food strategy**

Different policies and programmes have been developed by the Finnish government that work toward advancing Finnish Food. 2008-2011 a promotional program was initiated to increase the appreciation of food. There were activities to local and organic food consumption and increase international collaboration. In 2009, the Prime Minister's Office started preparatory work for an own Finnish food strategy that was implemented in 2010 dubbed "Food for Tomorrow". They were hoping to enhance quality, improve competitiveness and increase transparency in the food chain. The food policies support food health education the public through networking and collaboration. (Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö 2017)

The strategy is aimed to increase the possibilities of rural areas and flexibility in the production of food. In 2013, the Food Policy Committee was established. A network of seven ministries and representatives from different fields came together to further policy issues and execute political action. Improvement on nutritional factors, quality and traceability have been in programmes. Food waste management is overseen in the public sector and there is an effort to increase overall responsibility and sustainability in the food chain. In the future, bio economy can play a big part in tackling climate change. The vision is that by 2030, Finnish consumers will eat safe and sustainable food that is of good nutritional value. Consumers must have the opportunity to make informed choices. The food and service system will at that time be internationally competitive. (Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö 2017)

## **4 Methodology**

The objective of the research was to find what current global and Finnish food trends can be seen in the blogs written by tourists that visit Finland. By identifying the trends, we can

look into the foods and phenomenon that are prevalent. On the basis of the food related lifestyle model described earlier and the found trends we can research the current culinary market by analysing big data to draw conclusions that benefit different stakeholders in the hospitality sector. The keywords are chosen on the basis of the identified current trends discussed in the theoretical base.

Each of the blogs are read through using the qualitative method of pinpointing the different trends we have identified so far and making a quantitative data analysis in the timeframe of five years, 2012-2016, of the mentions by each year of blog publishing. To support the study, the text analysis program AntConc will be used that can quantitatively search specific words of choice in large amounts of text. With these two methods, we can spot the trends and make a cross-cut of the current food trends that are seen in tourists' blogs.

Information gathered by recommendations or others' opinions are viewed as more credible and trustworthy since they are not biased. Blogs are perceived as objective data and they are a good source of Word-of-Mouth information (Akehurst, 2009). The aim is to find as many blogs as possible within a five-year timeframe to increase the validity of the results. So far there has been limited efforts to study the contents of multiple blogs for research purposes due to the invested time and labour, i.e. monetary funds that have to be designated to the initiative. Correctly done, researching blog data can be a valuable method for gaining insights into the market due to the Word-of-Mouth content found in them and the ability to obtain imminent data compared to traditional survey methods.

Social media is one of the most important source for gathering knowledge about hospitality businesses. The perishability of the product or service calls for consumers to evaluate places of visit and restaurants in advance to avoid bad decisions. This is known as Akerlofs "lemon" problem. The product or service has to be consumed before an assessment of it can be made. (Akerlof 1970). People rely on others reviews and word-of mouth information to make purchasing decisions. Pruden & Vavra (2004) have focused on different stages in consumer decision-making; awareness, information gathering and decision making. In all the stages but awareness, 69% of interviewees considers word-of-mouth information as the most reliable source of recommendations for restaurants.

Silverman (2001) sees travel blogs as an influential force in the marketplace. Because consumers are discussing their own interests between each other they create trust and connections. When traditional marketing tries to influence consumers directly, an objective outside opinion is considered more valuable. Sharing something new and exciting that people are interested in, will gain a momentum and be shared more frequently. Trends will



become more widespread and create interest and demand which in turn makes consumers write more about them.

E-fluentials or opinion leaders are the 10% of the population that bring to light fresh ideas and concepts that the others then copy. These trendsetters are the ones to follow when looking for weak signals in the market that give hints of future megatrends. By analysing their digital footprint and activities in blogs, discussion forums and feedback, insights can be drawn for self-reflection. Monitoring word-of-mouth and trendsetters in the blogosphere can greatly benefit hospitality stakeholders (Sernovitz 2006). Blogs are an important source for information for both consumers in gathering information as well as suppliers of said products and services. Blogs are an important objective data source for market research and opinion mining, and that is why they are chosen as the source for the data in this research.

Marketing or social media plans, futuristic analysis or product development attempts derived of the data that is collected are not included to keep the study concise. The end result of the study can thus be taken into use by different stakeholder groups that have their own interest or need for research about big data about current trends in blogs written about Finland. These could be Finnish national food strategy makers, people in the food industry, business owners or other parties that have use of knowing the state of tourist perspectives and purchasing behaviours of food in Finland.

#### **4.1 Data acquisition**

The plan for data gathering was to search for a sufficient number of blogs through different blog search engines, websites and Google search. Because I wanted to find recent trends, I chose to include the last five years, 2012-2016, into the study. Five years was enough to spot the trends over a period of time that was enough to spot microtrends. The scope was deliberately also limited to that amount because of the amount of available blog data. Because of the labour-intensive work that was involved in reading all the blogs, a longer period would have added a considerable amount of working time. I found that 20 blogs per year was a sufficient amount was enough to make valid conclusions of the material. To understand how trends have evolved over this time I chose to segment each year into an own part. This way it should be possible to see the variation of mentions with each passing year. There was consideration of even further division into seasons because of the nature of Finnish seasonal food but that could not be achieved since there is usually always a time gap between the tourist travelling to the destination and only later on writing

about it. Going into seasons would thus not have yielded any valid results but would have been interesting to research.

After I had specified the scope of the study I knew I had to search for blogs written in that time and divide each blog link I found into their publishing year. Each blog link was saved in an own folder for further scrutiny. The aim was to get enough blog links so that the research would give a satisfactory result to work with. I did not originally have any sense of the actual number of blogs that were available. There were also limitations to how much material could be analysed. I did not know if I would be able to find enough or if there would be too many, so the minimum number of blogs to study per year was decided to be 20. 100 blogs altogether would surely give valid results of trends that could be seen in Finnish cuisine.

The language of the blogs would have to be English to keep results uniform and for the text-analysis tool to be able to draw conclusions of the text data. After studying the use of the AntConc concordance tool, I knew that the input data had to be in .txt file format. After reading through each blog I converted the text using the Microsoft Notepad tool into their own files and named them so that I could see in which blog and year a result could be found later on in the research when using AntConc. The format for saving the data was to be 2012\_x etc. with the year of publishing and x the order number of the blog in that year. Filing the blogs correctly would have an advantage in analysing the data in the programme and recognize patterns.

No blogs were researched where the tourist would make a roundtrip in many countries to only include blogs written about Finland. Most of the blogs were searched from Google with keywords directly. Many were also searched through blog sites with their search engines such as searchblogspot.com, travelblog.org and travellespoint.org.

## **4.2 Text analysis**

For this research, there will be two methods for text analysis to get a complete view on the different trends and to make a valid conclusion. The collection of written texts, the *corpora*, can be studied in multiple ways. Since it was obvious that there was going to be a large amount of data to be processed I wanted to find a software program that could possibly search the data for certain words in an efficient way. The most important feature was the word frequency calculator. The program should be able to give quantitative data on words depending on what text files were given to it and also have the possibility to insert certain sets of data separately. This would make it possible to study the blogs on a per

year basis and also look at the blog data as a whole. Another feature that was important was the KWIC (Key Word In Context). That would allow to find words in the text with relation to the sentences they were used in.

The study of the words in their context and in their relations, is called *concordance linguistics*. This means I could search for a word and also look at the sentences they were used in in a list form above each other for easier interpretation. From that, *collocation* can be seen, meaning words that appear close to each other. One could for instance search for the word 'expensive' in the corpus and find which items the tourists find expensive with the help of this tool. (Froehlich 2015)

There are many text-analysis tools that could be used for linguistics research depending on the aim. In a more high-level research, a deep understanding of the text-analysis tools give more options of dissecting information such as geoparsing (keywords in big data can be identified and mapped into a geographical location). There are other interesting possibilities as well such as sentiment analysis or opinion mining (do people think of something positively, neutrally or negatively). Those kind of research aims usually demand some sort of programming capabilities and computational readiness that can physically process that much information to draw out specific parsed information or concordance deductions for instance in a visually appealing way. In that way both the data input, programming and output can be very sophisticated. For this research, a more modest outlook on computational linguistics was taken due to the fact that there was no time or need to develop complex linguistics programming capabilities.

Language data has become important after the emergence of the Internet. Big companies such as Google and Facebook use the data that is generated to their advantage for different purposes. Skills and tools in corpus analysis are now capable of "distant reading", investigating text in a large scale that we cannot do when reading as individuals. Concordancer programs process and present data in understandable ways. They are also valuable for researchers as effective ways of dispensing data because of their different features. Some text-analysis tools only concentrate on certain tasks like the program Word-Smith Tools that help learners improve on their writing skills by doing word analysis on their own written texts. (Froehlich 2015)

After going through different options of text-analysis tools I concluded that the best possible software for my purposes was AntConc. This popular freeware program was developed by Laurence Anthony in Waseda University. This program includes all the different features described above: word frequency count, KWIC and collocation as well as many

advanced analysis methods. It has an easy-to-use GUI (Graphical User Interface) that looks similar to a Windows based application that is familiar. It has extensively been used for both basic and elaborate data analysis for multiple purposes. Below is a sample picture of the GUI when searching for the word “reindeer” in the text data.

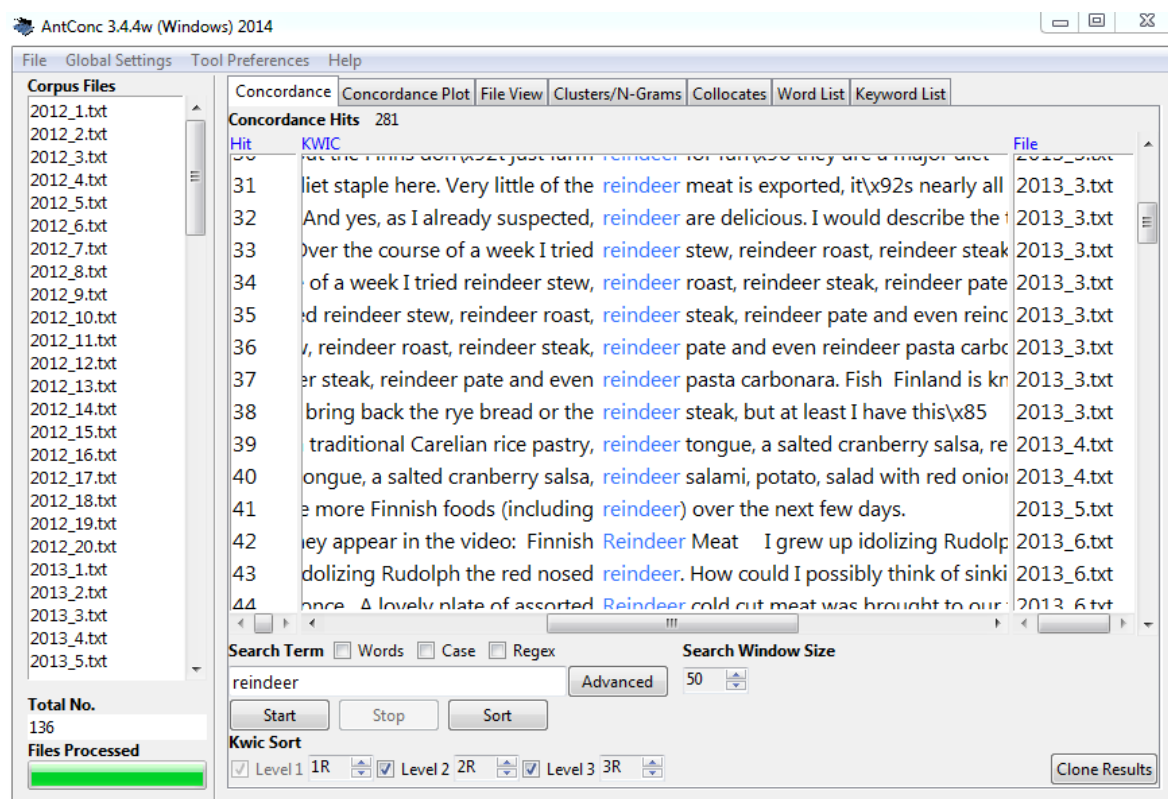


Fig. 2 Text analysis sample of AntConc

The text-analysis has many benefits in terms of this study but it is also lacking on one particular area. It can very well analyse the text in a quantitative way with given factors but it cannot bundle different synonyms together or separate word meanings. Grammatical dependency relations that are obvious to a human reading a text are almost always in some way lacking when it comes to the same type of computerized reading. The information technology is persistently striving for a coherent way in which computational linguistics could bridge between the natural language. Rule-based models, programming, statistics and artificial intelligence are trying to understand the human language with all its nuances but as for now, we are not completely there yet.

Not wanting to risk the reliability of the study, another viewpoint had to be taken that would account for the keywords or ‘mentions’ that were going to be calculated into the research. That is the reason for also conducting a narrative analysis that not only counts recurring words but also mentions in that specific group of words that goes toward counting a men-

tion of a trend. This means manually reading through each blog in the research and categorizing words to include e.g. the words eco, bio, organic and ecological into the same category and add a mention to the quantitative table each time one of these words are seen in the text. Words that mean similar things or that go within the same category are thus counted as well. Pictures or videos were not taken into account. Only relying on the text-analysis tool would give limited results because of the lack of human interpretation of the data, so both methods of computerized and human reading are necessary for getting reliable results.

### **4.3 Content analysis**

On the basis of the global and Finnish food trends that were identified in the theoretical part and the food related lifestyle model, the keywords were chosen that are searched in the blog text data. The most prominent trends within ways of shopping, cooking methods, quality aspects, consumer situations and purchasing motives that were chosen for this research are:

- Product information
- Ecological cooking methods
- Super food
- Local food
- Organic food
- Vegetarian food
- Traditional food
- International food
- Street food
- Seasonal food

The research is conducted so that a mention in the text of one of these trends or a picture that clearly indicates a mention of these keywords are counted in the result data. The amount of mentions indicates the strengths of the trend in the blog material per each year and as a total amount. These keywords are constructed by category and they describe various other topics that belong within them. Product information includes mentions of transparency of product origin, clear labelling and knowledge given of the product that is consumed. Any references in the text about visible product information within this category is counted. The ecological cooking methods category has within it themes of food waste, animal by-product use and use of leftover foods.

Super foods include foods that are viewed as exceptionally healthy foods due to their nutritional content. These foods include berries, mushrooms, salmon and other similar types of food products that go into this category. Local food items are specific mentions of local

delicacies or products. Organic foods can also mean eco or ecological foods. This trend can be harder to spot since the consumer might not especially indicate that the food is organic by nature in the blog even though it would be.

Alternative diets like the vegan and vegetarian diet are also searched. Even though currently only a marginal amount of the population is eating according to these diets, it is interesting to see if that trend is visible in the blog material. Traditional food is in this case Finnish food. Mentions of Karelian stew, reindeer, Karelian pasties and e.g. gravlax are counted in this category. International foods are foods that are not Finnish like tacos, Thai food or African cuisines. There is however a dichotomy in analysing ethnic cuisine; the cuisine that we might perceive as international food here in Finland might actually be traditional national food for the tourists that visit and vice versa so that Finnish food is seen as exotic cuisine for tourists. In spite of this, it is useful for the study to analyse the strength of the trend of international cuisine in relation to traditional Finnish foods.

Street food is food bought from street vendors. This category has within it mentions of food trucks and the Restaurant Day food festival since most of the foods are sold as street food outside. Seasonal food purchases and the importance of fresh ingredients going with the seasons are a trend that will most likely be found in the text data since it is so closely related to Finnish food as well.

All these categories and the themes within them were counted by narrative analysis of the blogs using a qualitative method and put into a quantitatively understandable form. Note that one food item can be counted towards two different mentions. I have chosen this approach because the two different categories do not exclude each other. Cuisine involving blueberries is considered a superfood in today's standard but it is also a traditional Finnish food item. Reindeer is considered to be a local food item as well as traditional food if the travel blog post is written in Lapland. Drinks and candies were left out of the initial quantitative analysis but they will be studied further with the help of the AntConc program.

The blog can have many mentions of the keyword in the text, but the mention is only counted if the writer recommends it or actually consumes the product. In some cases, there were general information about Finnish food and a keyword was repeated multiple times when giving general information or history about Finland. Those are not counted towards mentions, only consuming and recommending. Adding mentions for every time without criticism could not give reliable results of what was cuisine was actually enjoyed on the trip.

#### 4.4 Blog references

The references of the blogs are listed below per each year.

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## 4.5 Findings

The Finnish food culture is very interconnected with the current global food trends. The traditional food in Finland in general goes hand in hand with recognized trends of local-, organic- and superfoods. Even if globalization has brought new cuisines and tastes, the tourists coming to Finland still want to experience Finnish authentic, simple food. The Finnish cuisine has long since been built upon sourcing food nearby, be it then wild game, berries or mushrooms which still seem to be the staple foods that we enjoy. This type of cuisine is traditional for us but to tourists they might be exotic and new.

It is only now that the megatrends that shape the food consumption in the world has recognized Finnish food as something worth travelling for. When before no one had any expectations, or thought Finnish food was bland and boring, they now see the value in traditional Finnish food. When reading through the blogs I gained the impression that many tourists had no real sense of what Finnish food was but after they tasted it, they were exhilarated about it. Our cuisine has great strengths currently in the market because it has many characteristics that are almost synonymous with the current global trends, like the use of salmon and berries that are both considered superfoods.

There are cultural characteristics in Finland that speak to a wide audience. Finland is viewed as a clean and safe country but a quite expensive one. Original Finnish values like integrity, modesty and simplicity have translated into the food culture we have today and it's now becoming a larger movement, a megatrend. Some trends might not be seen in the text directly and even if they enjoyed a certain food item that belong to one of these trends they might not have written about it. One example could be wild game that is to a large extent organically grown meat, but one might not think about that when enjoying it, thus it is unlikely that it is mentioned in the data. One should also be aware of the fact that these blogs are what people chose to write about for others to read and they might include only the most interesting things that happened to them which might leave some things unmentioned that might be left outside the analysis.

Together, 136 blogs were researched that had mentions about food they had eaten while visiting Finland. 20 in the year 2012, 27 in the year 2013, 24 in the year 2014, 29 in the year 2015 and 36 blogs in the year 2016. There was much variation within the blogs; there were bloggers from all walks of life that enjoyed different things. As a whole, the research will give a general idea of present trends and tourist culinary experiences.

As I read through the blogs, I found that there were several keywords, places and phenomena of interest that were mentioned quite often. Those were written down to study later on with the AntConc program to get an overview of the total amount of mentions with those specific words. Some of those words that were seen often were for example Salmiakki, cinnamon rolls, Karelian pastries and Fazer. A summary of the findings will be presented further on in the research. Next however, are the specified trend keywords within the food related lifestyle model that were identified per value category. The line graphs indicate the percentage of the total amount of trend mentions and how they vary with each year. A percentage view was chosen over numeral information for validity since the number of researched blogs differ per each year. This way we can see if the trend is declining, rising or remaining stagnant over recent years.

#### 4.5.1 Ways of shopping

Product information was recognized as a current trend due to the customers wanting more information of what they are consuming. This trend might be usually seen when it comes to purchases made in the grocery store in everyday life, but the need for information is still present when being a tourist in another country. One could say that it is even more important when not understanding the language of the country one is visiting.

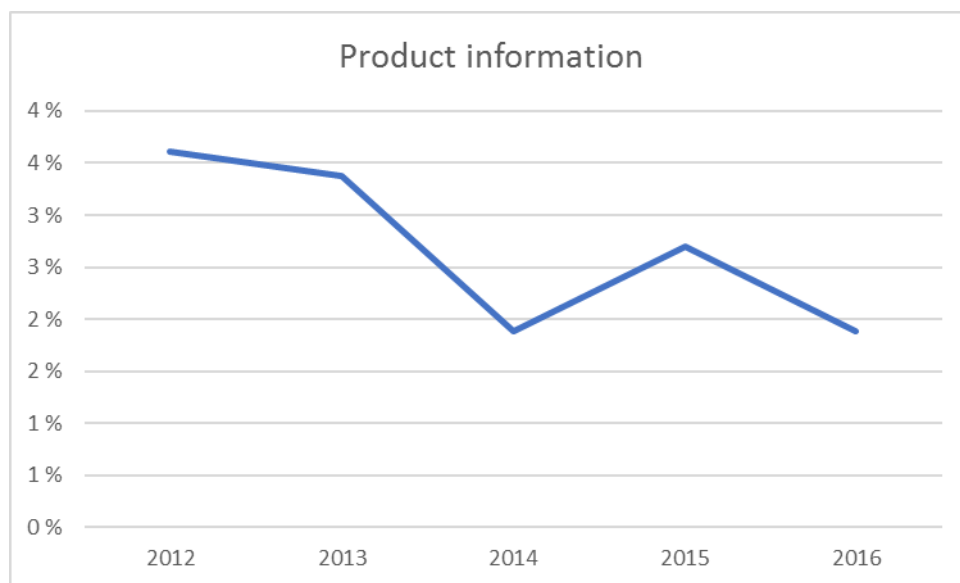


Figure 2. Product information mentions over time.

In the blogs, there were mentions of being positively surprised with the information available on different diets such as gluten free, lactose free and vegan products in the menus. It seems that not many countries have yet seen the need for customers' special needs but in Finland it is already seen as something taken for granted in many places.

One incident happened in a travel blog written in 2013 (number 9), when the tourist was visiting a market tent and wanted to try some reindeer meatballs. As soon as the writer started to carefully explain her having to eat only gluten free products, the salesman had interrupted her sentence and rapidly went on explaining that she could not eat them because they contained breadcrumbs. She then concluded: “Given the number of times I have mentioned the word “gluten” back home and get a blank stare, I was relieved that he easily understood”.

Asking for certain dishes on request from restaurants and gaining product information from waiters seem to have been easy. The good level of English speaking skills the Finnish people have goes a long way in helping to communicate with the locals. Even if this trend is declining, the amount of mentions is between two and five per year so there is very little variation. It might also be a positive sign overall; gaining product information has not been seen as a problem.

#### 4.5.2 Cooking methods

It seems that ecological cooking methods are not yet fully embraced as a trend. Even though many restaurants might make use of ecological methods, it has not translated into the consumers since the total amount of mentions is quite low. We can still see that the mentions are increasing over time.

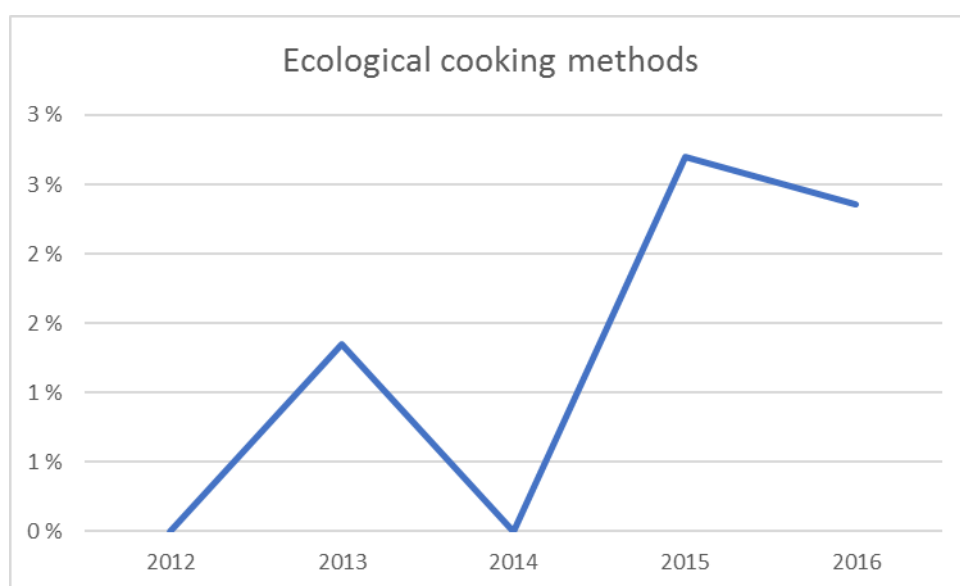


Figure 3. Ecological cooking methods mentions over time.

The trend of cooking ecologically has its base in understanding that much of what we eat goes to waste and we are not using the full potential in the use of our ingredients. With the already popular trends of using local foods, from farm to plate methods, and organic products, the trend of being very careful of waste and striving to be as ecologically friendly whilst making food is becoming an important one. The mention of this trend was mainly due to tourists visiting restaurants which practice this type of methodology in their cuisine. Juuri was one of the most discussed in its approach to use all the parts of raw ingredients it serves, along with the fact that they are organic.

This trend has been noted by the government as it has created a certification named Joutsenmerkki (Mark of the Swan) that a restaurant or hotel is as eco-friendly as possible. This certification is very difficult to attain due to its very strict and in most cases expensive requirements for infrastructure and waste disposal/energy attainment. 41 hotels and 11 restaurants in Finland have been given the notable certification.

As for this trend being a viable application to the restaurant industry it has already been implemented into a restaurant name Loop, as described earlier in the Trends in Food Culture section. Loop is a restaurant that makes Fine Dine portions from the leftovers that stores and suppliers have, minimizing waste at its maximum.

### 4.5.3 Quality aspects

Superfoods are closely intertwined with the Finnish food culture. We have many ingredients we use daily that are counted towards being superfoods today. These include many different berries, rye bread and different types of fish. Most of the mentions found in the blogs were of these ingredients.

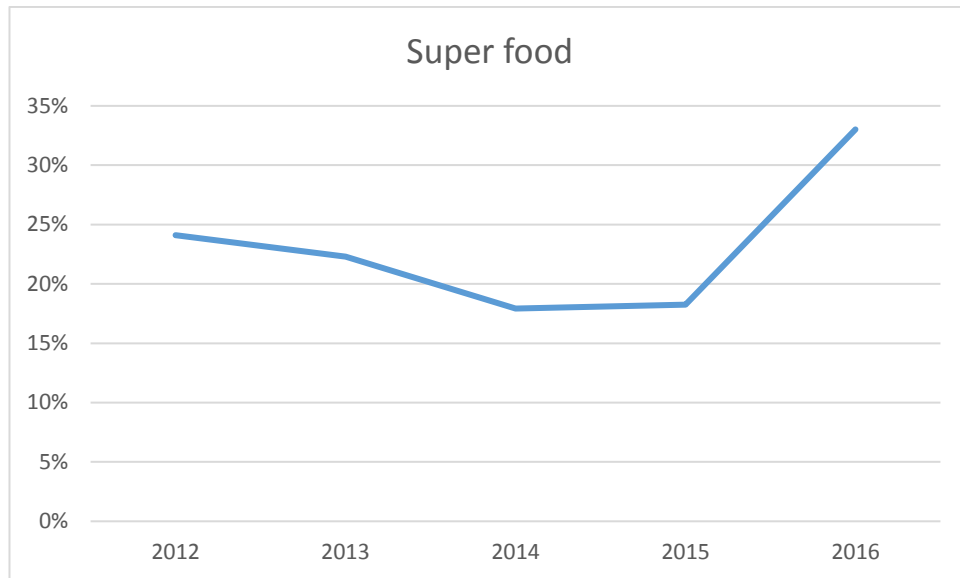


Figure 4. Super food mentions over time.

Finland has a surprisingly large selection of different berries to choose from; raspberries, cranberries, strawberries, bilberries, lingonberries, cloudberrries and crowberries. They are widely used as pairings with different meat dishes to counterbalance the fatty flavours of the meats. Most are used as jams such as lingonberry paired with reindeer stew or as decoration. Berries can also be seen in desserts of various forms but especially with a common traditional Finnish dish, “squeaky cheese” (leipäjuusto) paired with cloudberrries.

Different types of fish were also included into the superfood category. Salmon, whitefish, herring, arctic char, pike and perch pike were to most consumed fish in the blogs. The percentage of superfood of the amount of mentions within the years is fairly large, approximately a quarter the total amount overall were superfoods.

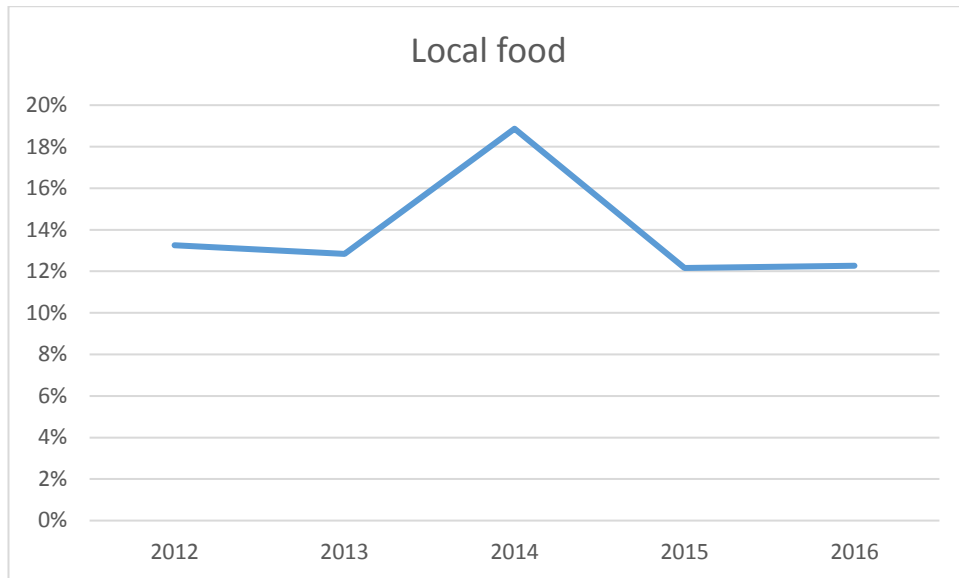


Figure 5. Local food mentions over time.

The percentage of the mention of local food vary between 12 and 19% of the total mentions. The amount is fairly large considering that the bloggers have specifically mentioned that the food is of local origin. I believe that the amount is surely even larger since this trend has a tendency to be unmentioned in most cases. Many of the food that is consumed in Finland is of local origin, for example foods with reindeer if the person is traveling in Lapland, or Baltic herring if they are in the capital region.

Many of the bloggers were visiting destinations where they actually caught the fish themselves, went berry and mushroom hunting or similar activities where the food was locally sourced and consumed. That is surely an experience that will resonate for a long time. There are many opportunities for tourists to be in the nature in all of the seasons, but they tend to travel mostly to Lapland in the winter and the capital region in the summer, even though there would be potential for increased tourism activity in the centre of Finland as well.

The amount of mentioned local food has been fairly constant over the years with a slight increase in 2014. Many restaurants nowadays try to increase their share of produce that is coming from nearby sources or even growing it themselves. With the increase of knowledge in the food industry processes, people are trying to eat food that has not travelled long distances, choosing options of fruit and vegetables that have minimal ecological impact. There is also a movement of restaurants to use wild herbs that are gathered nearby and even moss. This trend is present with consumers overall. Several recipes are popping up with ingredients you can harvest yourself, like using dandelions and nettles in



cooking. Overall, the word 'local' was mentioned 157 times in all of the blogs. Tourists are clearly aware of what is local cuisine and are actively interested in local things.

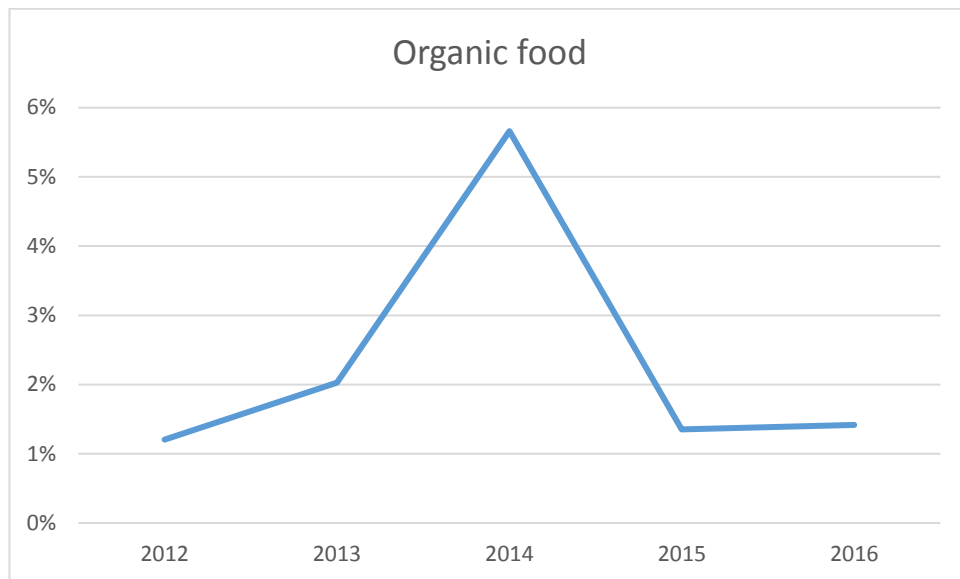


Figure 6. Organic food mentions over time.

The total mentions of explicitly organic cuisine vary from 1 to 6 between the years with an increase in 2014. It is important to again mention the fact that much of what is actually organic produce like reindeer meat, mushrooms and berries that are abundant in the text are all mostly organic produce but goes unmentioned. In total, the words 'berry', 'berries' and 'mushroom' are mentioned 258 times in the blogs, all of which are mainly organic. The word 'wild' was mentioned 56 times. Despite this, the actual focus on organic food is minimal. It seems that the tourists are eating plenty of organic food but are unaware of it.

There is still a share of persons that are searching for organic foods. The food shop Anton & Anton is a place where many tourists visit when staying in Finland, since it was mentioned 7 times. This shop concentrates on organic foodstuff. It would be beneficial for restaurants to mention the organic food items they are offering to increase the perceived value for those that see it as a benefit. Nevertheless, most people do not seem to be that interested in organic food on their visits.

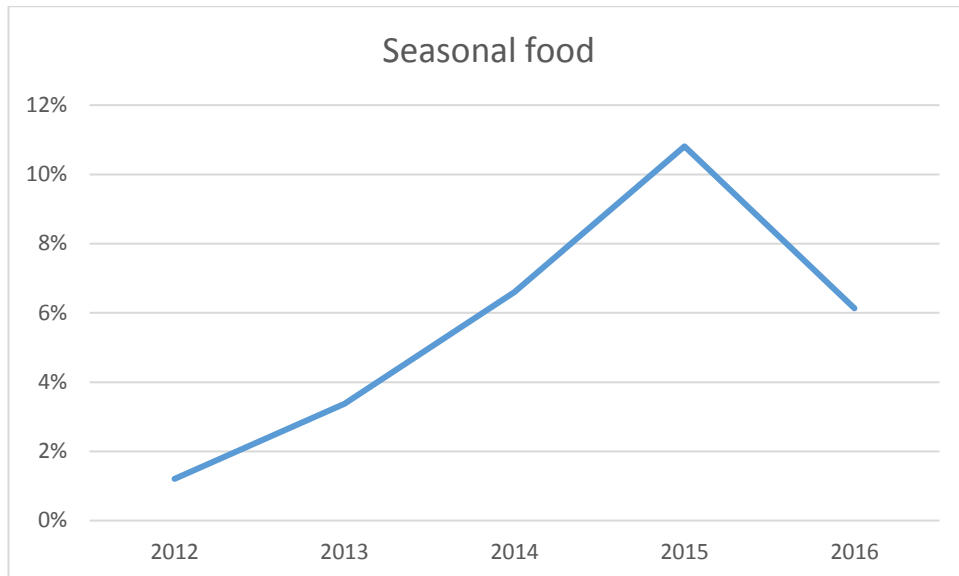


Figure 7. Seasonal food mentions over time.

Seasonal and Finnish foods are closely related to each other. Finland's climate is very seasonal and the population has therefore been challenged throughout history to make the best of what each season has to offer. Even in our modern culture where most of the food purchases are made in grocery stores, many people are aware of the seasonal changes in availability. Fresh food tastes better and it is cheaper when it's in season. There is also an ecological aspect; foods that can be grown outside in the summer and autumn seasons have a lesser impact on nature because they do not require green houses. Produce is often grown and harvested to be used in the seasons when food cannot be grown. Preserving foods with the help of methods like using vinegar, making jams, drying, salting and freezing food are all traditional Finnish methods.

Seasonal mentions have increased steadily over the years with a small drop in the last year. This trend has clearly been on the rise over time. It could be that people are becoming more aware of seasonal foods or that restaurants are also focusing more and more on offering seasonal cuisine. The words 'seasonal' and 'season' have altogether been mentioned 59 times in the blog material. Seasonal ingredients are becoming more apparent overall, which is positive.

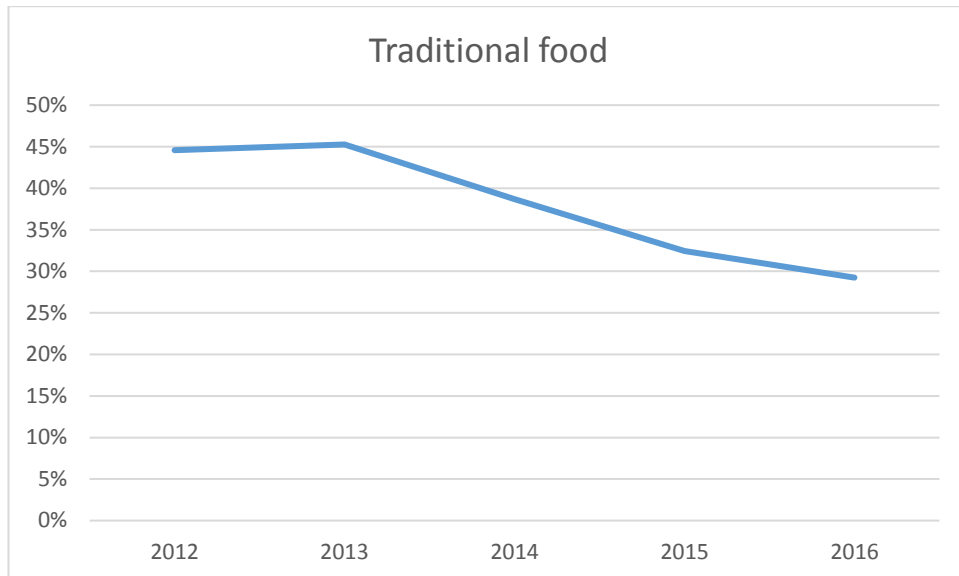


Figure 8. Traditional food mentions over time.

Finnish traditional food is by far the most consumed food currently by tourists visiting Finland. Of all the mentions in the blog texts in 2012 and 2013 different mentions of traditional foods were at its highest with approximately 45%. The most consumed dish was reindeer stew (poronkärstys). Other foods were also present in the material like Karelian pastries (karjalanpiirakka), rye bread, cinnamon buns and different fish dishes. Reindeer was mentioned a staggering 281 times. Of course, the word count includes seeing reindeer or visiting them, so they are not all food-related. The word 'rye' was mentioned 83 times in the 136 blogs which I found to be a fairly high number.

The amount of mentions of Finnish traditional food seem to be declining over time. Even though the overall number of visible trends are highest in traditional food in all of the years, tourists are starting to favour other types of dishes as well.

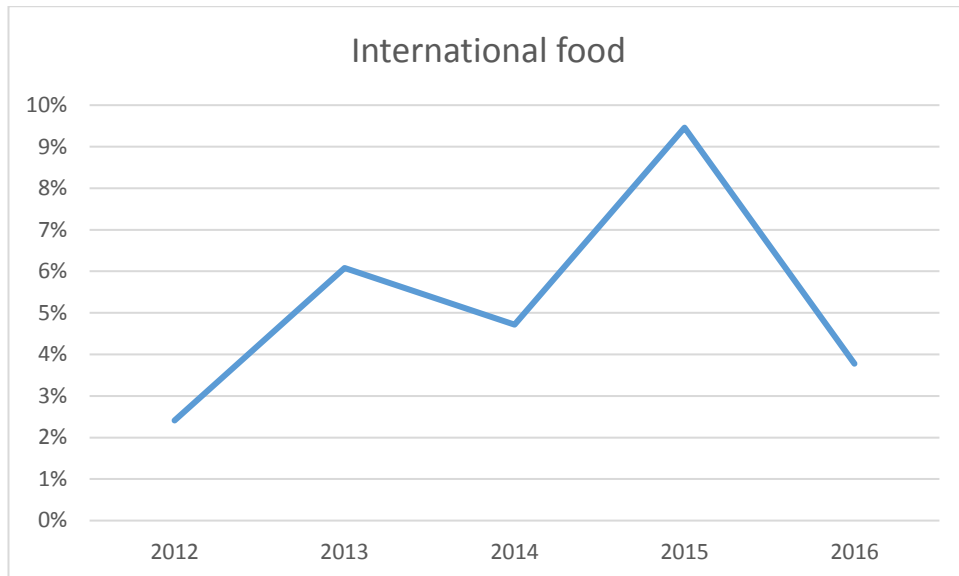


Figure 9. International food mentions over time.

International cuisines are overall on the rise, with decreases every other year but going higher after that. Based on the results in the previous trend about Finnish traditional foods, it would seem to collate to the increase of different international foods that are rising. Ethnic cuisine is very familiar to the x-generation and is viewed as everyday food. The rise of street food is also probably in connection with this trend since they serve a multitude of international foods. Also, globalization has resulted in an increasing number of food options. Many restaurants have opened that concentrate on certain cuisines or dishes and there is more variety between restaurants, as before there were fewer options to choose from.

Tourists want to taste traditional Finnish foods on their trip here as an experience but in a competitive marketplace, other cuisines are gaining foothold as well. International cuisines like Asian and Italian are popular alternatives because of their inexpensive prices. The norm for traditional Finnish food is having a significantly higher price point in comparison to alternative international cuisines, especially the classic Finnish restaurants that tourists usually visit.

#### 4.5.4 Consumption situations

There is an overall positive growth in the number of mentions of street food and aspects relating to street food overall. As street foods and food trucks are a notable trend in many other Nordic capitals the trend can be seen throughout the Helsinki area with the Finnish government passing a law that allows for the use of mobile trucks that can serve food; previously the law stated that they were not allowed to move from one place to another.

There is also an increased number of restaurants that have become street food vendors as well such as Gastro, Fafa's, Asian Kitchen etc.

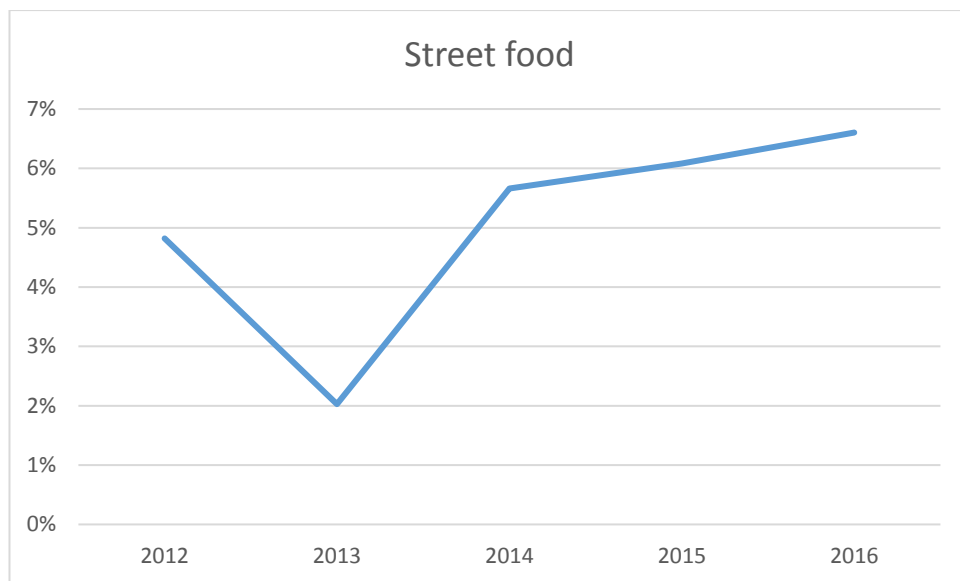


Figure 10. Street food mentions over time.

There are two reasons for the increase percentage of mentions within the blogs in general. Firstly, the rising popularity and increase in the event 'Restaurant Day' where anyone can set up a pop-up store for 1 day. Although this day has had very good success in the past, it became so popular when it started to spread worldwide that the organizers had difficulties in making it happen and decided to convert the four days of the year that the Restaurant Day operated into a concept spanning over the whole year. This way the restaurateurs could set up any day of the year. That resulted in a decrease of Restaurant Day events and people took advantage of the ability to sell food without having to pay taxes as well as the inability of the Finnish government to regulate safety standards. Although the original creators of 'Restaurant Day' had a change in the year 2016, they are continuing with the previous concept again in 2017 with four days of the year. Even though they did not arrange the event like before, there were still 15 mentions of the event in the blogs of that year. It seems that the popularity of the event did not decline in spite of the change, but of course the writers could have been unaware of it.

Secondly the mention of the market square and its offerings was listed by many different blogs, as it is located in the very epicentre of the tourist area of Helsinki many people visited it and wrote about in a positive light. Food bought in the Market Squares is essentially street food and many bloggers were eating fried vendace and waffles. Food trucks have before only served traditional grill food like hamburgers and unhealthy fried foods, but currently there are an increasing amount of options to choose from different cuisines around

the world. The street food trend is ascending steadily and other operators in the restaurant field should take note.

#### 4.5.5 Purchasing motives

Vegetarian food has been mentioned mostly in 2012 and 2015. The amount of people eating by a vegetarian or vegan diet is quite small in the population and that can also be seen in the amount of mentions. It can also be that the tourists are not mentioning their diets in their blogs even though they eat vegetarian food. The word 'vegetarian' was mentioned 18 times and 'vegan' 17 times. Other diets were mentioned as well such as gluten-free and lactose-free.

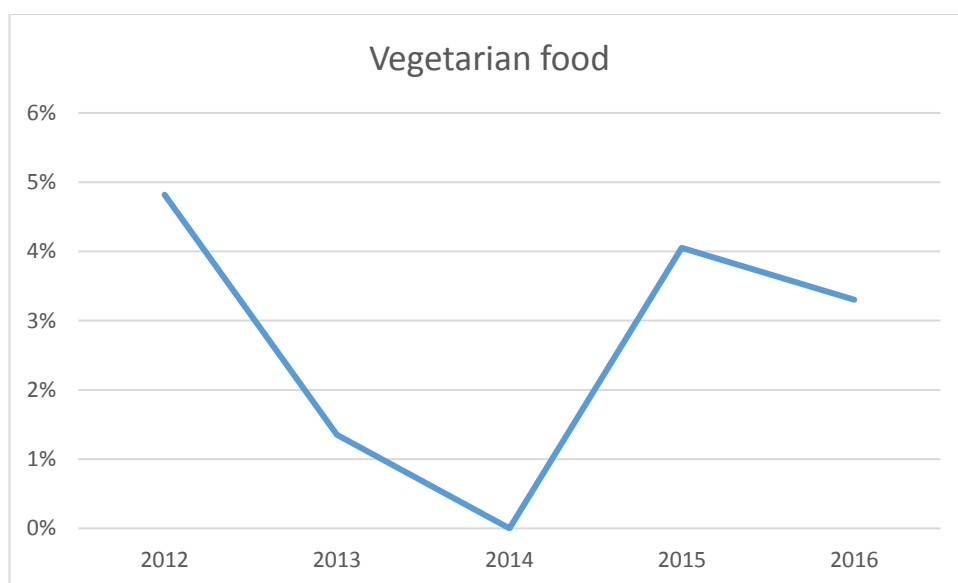


Figure 11. Vegetarian food mentions over time.

A recent article in Independent covered the top 10 cities for vegan travellers and Helsinki was one of them. This is due to the growing trend within Finland of coming up with new and innovative alternative products like pulled oats (nyhtökaura). They believe that pulled oats will soon be Finland's biggest food export. According to the article, chefs in Finland are vegan-friendly, there are alternative milks at cafeterias and there are almost always vegetarian food options in the menus. (Independent 2017)

It seems that the trend of vegetarian food has not yet taken off completely, even though there would be vegetarian options available. The global trend of vegetarian food cannot at least of yet be seen in tourists' purchasing behaviour.

#### 4.5.6 AntConc results

During the reading of the blogs, prominent words were chosen to study further and see the strength by keyword counts. This supports the study by looking quickly analysing large amounts of text. The following tables explain shortly the words that were found related to ingredients. Drinks, sweets, places and brands were searched that were not considered in the qualitative method to get a sense of their importance in the blog data.

Table 1. Words related to fish

Word	Amount of hits
Fish	161
Herring	27
Salmon	133
Perch	16
Vendace	10
Char	8
Pike	13

The mentions of fish were among the highest out of all the results in AntConc. The reason for the very high number of results is the fact that a very large portion of tourists who visited Finland consumed different fish and generally explained about Finnish food culture. The fact that fish is a staple of the Finnish diet contributes to the high number of results.

Table 2. Bread and Bakery

Word	Amount of hits
Bread	103
Rye	61
Munkki	5
Korvapuusti+cinnamon roll/bun	23
Pulla	11

The mention of breads was apparent in many blogs, the fact that rye was mentioned so many times was due to the fact that it is not a very common bread outside of Nordic countries and many people found it a surprising type of bread. It is also a Finnish staple food.

Table 3. Cuisine Related Words

Word	Amount of hits
Traditional	106
Street food	26
Food truck	3
Fresh	95
Simple	31
New Nordic Cuisine	6
Tapas+sapas	16
Blini	14

The type of words that are cuisine related were chosen because they were many mentions of them in the blogs. The high amount of results for traditional is due to the fact that when tourists come to Finland they want to try traditional Finnish foods and there are many restaurants that cater to this demand. Fresh was also notably mentioned.

Table 4. Sweets

Word	Amount of hits
Salmiakki	46
Chocolate	51
Liquorice	17

The mention of Salmiakki was apparent due to this being a very uncommon type of sweet for many of the tourists. As salmiakki and liquorice are predominantly Nordic confectionaries, they stood out among the type of sweets that were talked about in the blogs.

Table 5. Traditional Finnish Foods

Word	Amount of hits
Karelian pie/pastry/pasty	19
Berry	93
Reindeer	281
Karelian stew	2

The mention of berries was very high, especially for blogs which were written during the summer months and different berries being in season then. The amount of times reindeer was mentioned was very large, but not all of the mentions are directly related to cuisine and food but rather the reindeer herding in Lapland. On average, the word reindeer was present over two times per each blog.



Table 6. Beverages

Word	Amount of hits
Lonkero+long drink	13
Vodka	31
Coffee	180
Napue + gin	13
Beer	65
Brewery	7

The mention of coffee was very high because Finnish people drink the most coffee in the world per capita, and this was apparently known to very many of the people who wrote the blogs. Lonkero and long drink was mentioned because it is originally a Finnish beverage that the tourists had not tasted before. The mention of the expensive price of beer in Finland was stated in many of the blogs.

Table 7. Restaurants, places and brands

Word	Amount of hits
Ask	14
Savotta	14
Juuri	14
Spis	11
Chef & Sommelier	10
Fazer	50
Market Square	71
Suomenlinna	84

There were several mentions of traditional cuisine style restaurants, such as Savotta, Ask and Juuri, as well as mentions of more fine dining institutions like Spis and Chef & Sommelier. The mentions of the market square and Suomenlinna were high as they are the most popular tourist destinations. This information was gathered just to see how present those destinations were in the blogs. Overall, the keyword count gives more in-depth information that are not directly related to the food trends. The results contain interesting results in words that could not have been evaluated with narrative analysis only and by reading the blogs by themselves.

## 4.6 Conclusion

This figure summarizes the development of all the different trends into one. The highest amount of mentions is of traditional Finnish food, superfood and local food over the whole five-year period.

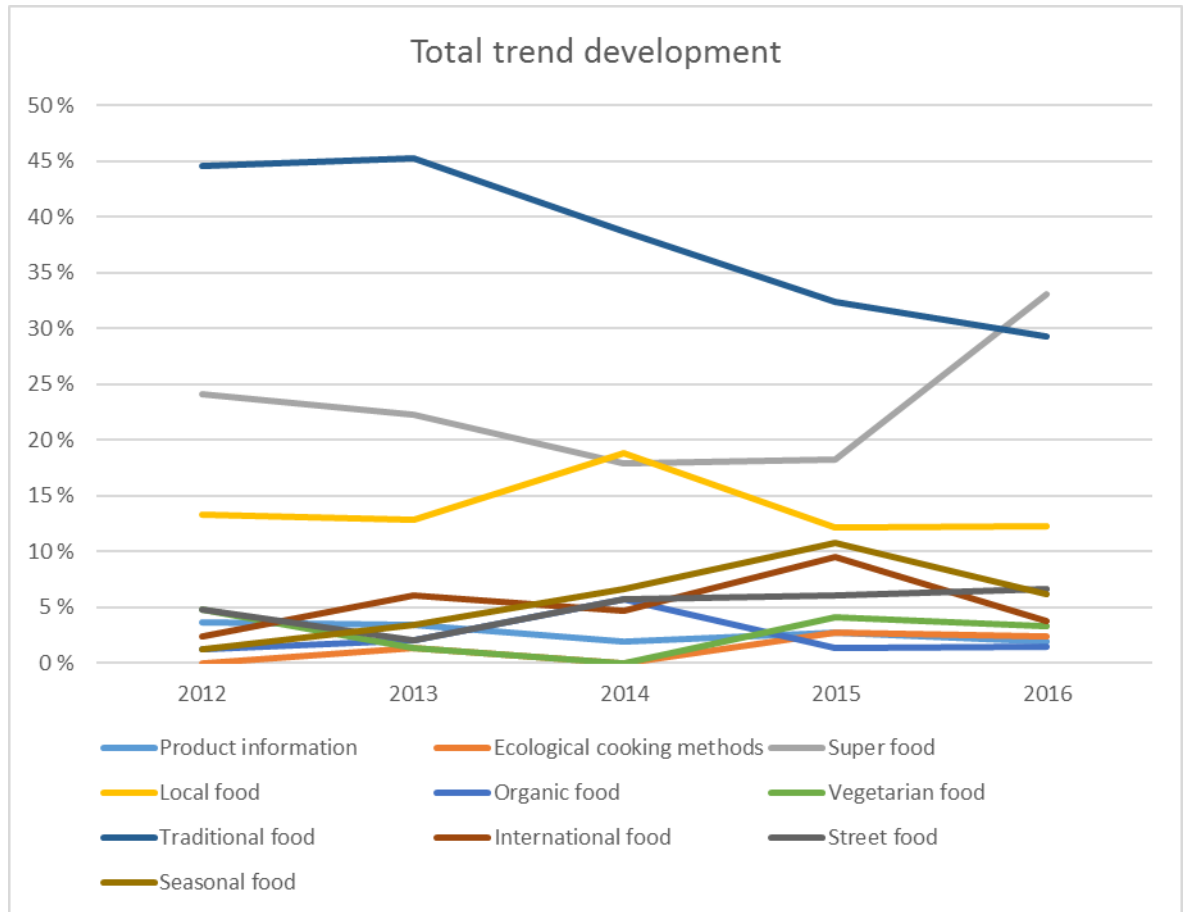


Figure 11. Total Trend development

Traditional food will probably remain strongly present in the Finnish culinary field since tourists want to experience something new and get a feel for the place they are visiting. Traditional Finnish food has remained the most eaten cuisine over all of the years and that is not likely to change very soon, even though international cuisines are also present in the market. Many connect their tourism experience with the destination as a whole and want to sample traditional Finnish food. Traditional food has many strengths that carry it forward since it has many benefits in connection with seasonality, local food and superfoods as a whole, all of which are recognized trend today.

The trends that are currently rising super food, street food, seasonal food and international food. These figures have ascended overall and are becoming more visible. Superfoods like mushrooms, berries and fish all have great nutritional contents and they are

gaining popularity worldwide while also being a strength in Finnish cuisine. There should be more effort in highlighting and marketing these elements in tourism industry and possibly create more experiences that go together with harvesting and catching the produce for themselves.

Street food is an established trend and it's growing rapidly. Even though street food is mostly concentrated on the summer season, it is clearly something that people are enjoying and writing about. There are many possibilities of expanding the selection of offered items and gaining profit. Because it is a growing phenomenon, there are a lot of opportunities for entrepreneurs which could be used to their advantage.

Being aware of seasonality has many benefits for both restaurants and consumers. Seasonal food tastes better, is cheaper and has less impact on the environment. Restaurants are increasingly offering seasonal menus for fresher ingredients and a better profit margin. Consumers want variety and the taste of the seasons in their food. This fact could also be utilized even more in the restaurant industry since people are, according to the blog text material, becoming more aware of seasonal ingredients and foods.

International cuisine is also growing steadily. With more options and the availability of alternative cuisines, the tourists are enjoying more international cuisines when they visit such as Mexican food and other international cuisines of which restaurants have established recently. On the other hand, traditional foods have decreased over time while international food has become more popular in the last five years. More fusion concepts have also grown over the years and shifted the focus from a Finnish traditional cuisine to different forms where other types of cuisines are mixed. Ingredients are combined to make something totally new for customers to enjoy, while tastes are still complementing each other.

Organic food, product information, ecological cooking methods and vegetarian food has remained stagnant but with little overall visibility. Those are more marginal and are not yet seen in tourists' blog writings much, at least of yet. Ecological cooking and product information might be more consumer trends that are currently taking place outside the restaurant environment and might not be seen in restaurants that much yet. There are forerunners in the restaurant industry that are trying to spread the message of ecological cooking like the food waste restaurant Loop that makes food from waste products. They are also starting to make their own beer from bread that has been discarded from grocery stores since the bread accounts for a large number of food waste in stores. There is a growing

interest in ecological cooking methods, but restaurants are only just starting to push it forward.

Organic food is not mentioned in the blog texts many times, but many of the foods that was eaten was organic by nature, as goes with wild game, berries and mushrooms that are staple Finnish ingredients. Since Finland already has such a strong base in organic foods and reputable control over food manufacturing and labeling, this trend could be pronounced more in the restaurant industry. We already have mentions of vegan, gluten free and lactose free products. Labeling food as organic could be very beneficial to people that are concerned with health because it is viewed as more healthy food and to ecologically aware consumers. A step forward in this direction could give more value to the products that already organic.

Vegetarian food is hardly mentioned in the blogs as well, but there is a larger movement globally that is supporting this development. Finland's food strategy has also started to bring vegetarian food to the public instances like schools by enforcing new guidelines. Eating a plant-based diet has a positive health- and environmental impact.

By researching these weak signals of trends in firsthand written material of tourists' blogs, we can try to predict the future of tourists purchasing behaviors. The gathered information benefits many parties that want to gain market data for their own benefits. There is a possibility to build upon positive online reputation of Finland's cuisine and Finnish branding as a tourism destination. Social media plans can be put into place that reinforce good word-of-mouth and take preventive action to steer branding efforts in the right direction.

Supporting trends and improving on them addresses the consumer in a straightforward way. Exceeding expectations of the consumer by refining the offerings that are available and by giving the consumers what they are already looking for boosts positive experiences. Finnish food is interconnected to the recognized global food trends right now and can gain a large momentum if supported in the right ways. The research has shown that there are many strengths but also opportunities available currently for development. Some trends are only beginning to unravel but we also have very strong trends visible. We can use this information to our advantage and provide culinary experiences for the tourist's that visit Finland, benefiting both the consumers and entrepreneurs in the field.

## 5 Discussion

There was a concern with gathering enough blogs for a reliable result. In the year 2012, there was only a scarce number of blogs that could be counted into the study that included mentions about foods but the minimum of 20 blogs per year was still achieved. In the following years, it was easier to find material. With a total of 136 blogs that were researched for the study, I believe that it was enough to make conclusions of trends that were present currently. Ideally, a greater number of blogs would have increased the reliability of the study but here was still enough material to make conclusions. The amount of mentions in the text relied on what blog source I had chosen as data. The workload would also have increased with each blog analysis taken into account. A similar kind of study could be executed in the future with a larger amount of material to see how the trends have developed further.

The blogs were a valid tool for finding out the purchasing behaviours and value perceptions that were intended for the study. Blogs are subjective experiences that are written by the person who have experienced the events themselves and they generally have no ambitions to falsify their own opinions. There is still a possibility that some of the blogs had commercial interests that could not be seen in the text. Some of the trends that are currently present could have been unmentioned in the text which makes it possible that there is still some phenomenon or trend that has not been researched. Those trends that were chosen for the study were still visible in the data results even though some of them has a smaller impact. This means that the theoretical framework is closely connected to the results.

The results were somewhat surprising since there was no clear result from the start that could have been predicted. Only when starting to read through the blogs rigorously I started to form some ideas of what food mentions were seen more often. I believe that the two research methods, first qualitatively reading through the blogs and quantitatively counting the mentions was a good method to find results. There is always a risk of human error in making narrative analysis because of different deviation errors but it was the only way with which to gain knowledge. While reading I was very critical when counting the mentions; only when the person had actually eaten or recommended the food did it count. By reading the material through I found different words that were recurring and noted them down to analyse with the text analysis program AntConc to see their strength and make quantitative conclusions that could not have been done only with reading them through. Keyword analysis using AntConc could not have been done without narrative analysis first, and finding blog trends could not have been made only with a text-analysis

program. The results found in this study were thus supported by the two methods working together. A more extensive knowledge of the program would have made it possible to make an even more detailed analysis. With a better knowledge in linguistics and using computer text-analysis software one could research further the positive and negative options towards different foods and gain deeper insight.

Overall I found the research to be a very interesting one but demanding a lot of manual work in reading through the blogs while making sure to keep the rules I set for myself with counting the mentions throughout the text. Reading the blogs was still entertaining. The development of trends to this point and speculation about the future is very interesting since it closely related to real-world experiences that are taking place continuously. I have gained a deep understanding in Finnish cuisine, global food trends and tourists opinions of Finnish destinations.

Since the results concentrate of the development of the last five years it would nice to see a futuristic analysis being made of the results that would carry the research on. The research only describes what is happening now but there are a multitude of possibilities for using this data for other purposes. These could be Finland brand plans, food strategies, new concepts, building menus and gaining current knowledge of the marketplace.

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